

MJB Strategies

July 8, 2004

Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

MB Docket No. 04-207

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Congress' proposal to provide an "a la carte" alternative to the current cable system. This poorly thought out proposal will seriously undermine the progress our country has made in diversifying its television programming and I urge your strong opposition.


Today, despite some gains made by television companies to include and positively portray minority groups in their programming, there is still woefully inadequate representation of minority actors and, more importantly, actors that portray their communities in a positive light or accurately reflect life experiences. Cable channel capacity increases provide an excellent opportunity to more adequately reflect the diversity of America.

These new channels have been able to thrive because of how cable operators introduce them into their program line-up. In an "a la carte world," where viewers pay separately for each channel, they are unlikely to spend their money on a new channel they know little or nothing about.

Thus, under an "a la carte system," channels that appeal to more specialized audiences, such as BET, Telemundo, TV One, ESPN Deportes, C-SPAN and The Learning Channel, would have trouble attracting subscribers, resulting in an inadequate number of subscriptions which in turn would increase cost, decrease revenues and essentially put these important specialty channels out of business.

I urge you not to support the enactment of an "a la carte" system.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL J. BUSTAMANTE
Principal

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